

Capitol Report

News & Updates from Your State Capitol
By Arkansas Secretary of State Charlie Daniels

A Look Back on 2008

Multiple statewide elections, extensive restoration work, new teaching resources and newly legislated corporate filings kept the Arkansas Secretary of State's office busy during 2008. A few of the highlights from each division included:

Business & Commercial Services

In 2008, LPs and LLLPs were required for the first time to file annual reports. Of the 6,090 Limited Partnerships registered with the Secretary of State, 1,528 (25 percent) sent annual reports. Of the 505 Limited Liability Limited Partnerships filed with the state, 169 (33 percent) submitted an annual report.

Nonprofit entities were also required to submit an annual report for the first time in an effort to clean up records and remove

defunct entities from state databases. At the end of 2007, the Secretary of State had 34,289 nonprofits on file. By the end of 2008, 11,785 (34.37 percent) had submitted reports.

Building/Grounds

Workers continued restoring exterior stonework and other features of the State Capitol. The north vestibule on the first floor received new marble flooring, and the north and south vestibule doors were restored to match other existing wood interior doors. Meanwhile, two of the monumental bronze doors required repairs and reconstruction of hinges, while offices in the lower level underwent remodeling and the lower level roof was replaced to stop leaks.

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New Election Laws Emerge from 87th General Assembly

With the legislative session now drawn to a close, Secretary of State Charlie Daniels notes a series of new election laws will impact the state's voters and election administrators.

"My office will be working with election officials across the state this summer to educate them on the new requirements in advance of the 2010 elections," Sec. Daniels said. "Of particular importance to the state's voters is the change in the date of the presidential primary from February, as it was in 2008, back to May with the statewide preferential primary." Sec. Daniels continued, "Voters will also notice that the ballot issue titles will be simpler in that there will be only one ballot issue number one, two and so on."

Secretary Daniels' election legislative package sought to streamline election administration and improve the voting process. Legislation that was enacted included:

Act 659 (SB 353) sponsored by Senator Steve Faris (District 27) revises Amendment 51, the voter registration provision in the state constitution. This new law cleans up the language regarding felons to make it consistent with other sections of the code,

allows overseas voters to vote absentee without prior registration by submitting a federal post card application, and requires county-to-county voter registration transfers to be received in the county clerk's office not later than four days before the election, among other clarifications.

Act 703 (HB 1879) sponsored by Representative Bobby Pierce (District 19) clarifies that county clerks do not send special runoff ballots to overseas and uniformed voters for judicial elections since the nonpartisan judicial runoff is held concurrently with the general election in November instead of in June with the other races.

(See LEGISLATURE continued on Page 4)



Another successful meeting of the Arkansas General Assembly is now behind us. It was a very productive session, especially in regards to efforts to streamline election administration and voting procedures.

Some of the highlights of that legislation included Act 375, which does away with the separate Presidential Primary, held in February 2008 for the first and final time. The move was well-intentioned, certainly, but it had the unintended effect of increasing costs, reducing turnout in the May Primary and causing confusion with overlapping deadlines. Arkansans will now head to the polls again in May to select all their party's nominees for office.

While I am pleased overall with our new election laws, I must admit I am disappointed that one of the primary pieces of our legislative package lost support in the last days of the session. Sponsored by Representative Rick Saunders (District 24), HB 1485 would have required each county to hire an election coordinator to administer elections.

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With as many as four people currently responsible for election administration at the county level, Arkansas is one of the few remaining states that continues to rely primarily on volunteers to administer elections. With the passage of federal mandates, that task has grown to involve an immense amount of time and require meticulous knowledge of election procedures and technology.

Representative Saunders withdrew the bill and referred it to interim study after county judges and circuit clerks had second thoughts about the immediate diversion of commercial financing statement fees from their 2009 budgets to the state to pay for general elections. The \$2.5 million freed by the state taking over the general elections would have been used to hire the coordinators.

My hope is that these concerns can be resolved and that all our counties will eventually have the additional election professionals they need. Until then, my staff and I will continue to be here for our county election officials and support them in any way we can. We have a good, reliable election system in place with dedicated Arkansans at the helm, and I am proud to have the opportunity to work with them in service to the citizens of our great state.

Save a Tree

Sign up for the all-new

Capitol Report e-News!

To receive the electronic version of future issues of Capitol Report, sign-up online at

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New Program Brings State Symbols to Life

Students of all ages learn about Arkansas history, symbols and voting through a number of Secretary of State programs. One of the newest is the Arkansas State Symbols Activity Box, a hands-on traveling presentation for primary school students.

The activity box is an interactive way to illustrate the state's official symbols and make them come to life for students in preschool through third grades. Children explore samples such as a 10-pound Dutch oven, bauxite ore, quartz crystal, honey sticks from Petit Jean, rice from Riceland Foods, and a gallon of diamond dirt from Crater of Diamonds State Park. By seeing, touching and even tasting some of these objects, students' understanding goes beyond the popular State Symbols Activity Book the office has provided for many years.

The ideal audience is 25 children or fewer, so each student can handle each of the state symbols during the one-hour presentation. To schedule the Arkansas State Symbols Activity Box, contact Jennifer Schaffner at (501) 682-3025 or by e-mail at jennifer.schaffner@sos.arkansas.gov.

Young Voters Month

In other education news, this March marked the sixth year for Young Voters Month activities. Secretary Daniels, in cooperation with the National Association of Secretaries of State, hosted the National Young Voter's Month Program March 17-18 in Little Rock at the Association of Arkansas Counties Building. The Communications & Education Division conducts the event semi-annually to encourage an early interest in voting. More than 1,000 Arkansas students have participated since it began in 2003.



Education Coordinator Jennifer Schaffner leads the state folk dance at Jonesboro's Fox Meadow Elementary.

(2008 Continued from front page)

Communications & Education

The Secretary of State's office unveiled a new civics curriculum in summer 2008. The free lesson plans for grades K-8 are the combined efforts of teachers, the University of Central Arkansas, the Department of Education and the Secretary of State's office. Funded in part by a grant from the Arkansas Humanities Council and Center for Civic Education, the curriculum aligns with all social studies requirements.

Elections

Arkansas held a separate presidential preferential primary election in February 2008, hoping to garner more national

attention during the campaign season. When many other states followed suit, Arkansas did not receive the hoped for attention, leading to a bill during this legislative session to return to the traditional May primary election.

The general election in November drew near-record numbers of voters. About 28 percent of Arkansas's registered voters cast early or absentee ballots, totaling approximately 430,000 ballots. At the end of the general election, 1,086,617 Arkansas voters had participated: 64.52 percent of the state's electorate.

Secretary Daniels said the many ongoing projects and activities around the Capitol indicate the office's dedication to providing excellent service to the public.

Online Filing Streamlines Ethics Reporting, Improves Public Access

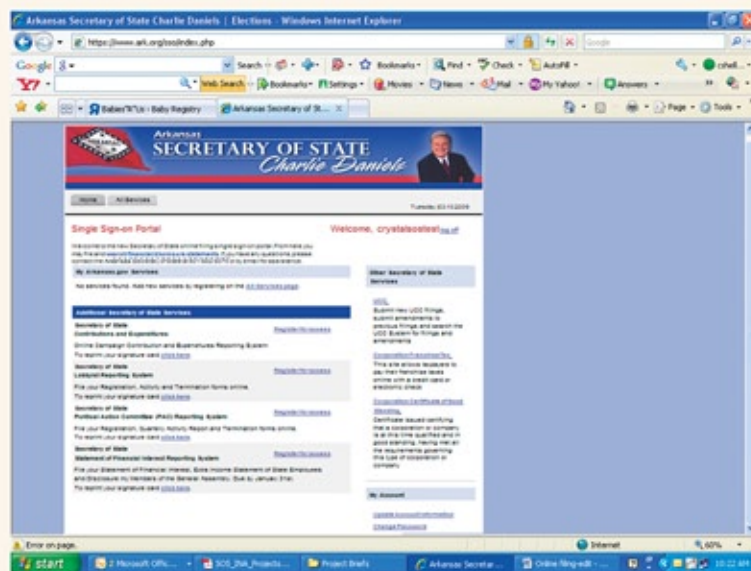
The Arkansas Secretary of State's Office, in cooperation with the Arkansas Ethics Commission, recently rolled out a new suite of web-based applications that allows numerous financial reports to be entered online. Candidates, lobbyists, Political Action Committees, legislators and certain state employees can now register to file their required reports on the web.

Online reports include Statements of Financial Interest; Campaign Contribution and Expenditure (CC&E); and Lobbyist and Political Action Committee disclosures. This new online application provides filers with a convenient, more user-friendly option to paper-based filing, while also making information more open and available to the public.

Filers use a single portal to access all of the different online financial reports they may be required to file. First-time users who have registered for an Arkansas.gov account can log in to the new portal and create a user name and password for financial disclosures. During the sign-up process, the new filer will see instructions on submitting an original signature

as required by law. Once the user has submitted a signature card to the Secretary of State, an administrator approves the registration, and the system automatically e-mails a notice to the user, who can then log-in to the portal and begin filing reports.

(See ONLINE continued on Page 5)



Outreach Staff Cover the State in 2008

Arkansans are always welcome to become more familiar with the Secretary of State's office, the State Capitol and the elections process, and many are availing themselves of that opportunity.

During 2008, representatives of the Secretary of State's office conducted or participated in over 240 events around Arkansas. Those events ranged from speaking to school groups and civic clubs, to hosting booths at trade shows and conventions.

The Secretary of State Speakers Bureau, available for groups in social, professional or academic settings, discusses topics including state and Capitol history, business incorporation, notaries public, voting rights and procedures and the legislative process.

"My staff continues taking the Capitol and our programs out to the people of Arkansas," Secretary Daniels said. "I think it's very important to make ourselves available, and make the office, the Capitol building and our procedures accessible to the public, whether or not they can come to Little Rock and see it firsthand."

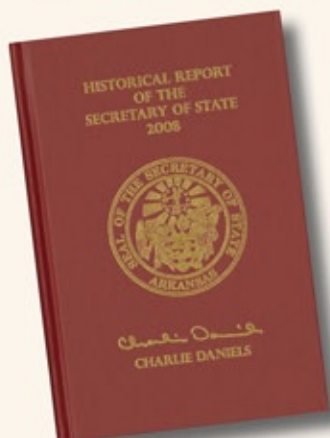


New Edition of Historical Report Now Available

Secretary of State Charlie Daniels is proud to present the latest edition of the **Historical Report of Arkansas**, and offer it for the first time in an online, searchable format at www.sos.arkansas.gov.

Published just once each decade by order of the General Assembly, this ready reference is a compendium of elected officials who have served over the state's 172-year history, including detailed results from state and federal elections. Feature essays offer insight into the state's history, politics and State Capitol construction as well as the state's native peoples.

The 2008 edition carries on more than a century of similar publications, which appeared as early as 1880. Those familiar with the publication will enjoy the book's updated, more user-friendly format. Authorized by the General Assembly, this volume was compiled and designed by the Secretary of State's office and published in collaboration with the University of Arkansas Press. To order your free copy, visit www.uapress.com and click on the "Spring 2009 – New Titles" link or call 1-800-626-0090.



(LEGISLATURE Continued from front page)

Act 959 (SB 813) sponsored by Sen. Faris allows school boards to wait an additional year after the census to draw school zones, allows county boards of election commissioners to publish notice of voting machine testing and to abbreviate titles for candidates if space considerations require it, among other technical clean up provisions.

Act 1480 (SB 894) sponsored by Sen. Faris clarifies and improves language and procedures in the election code regarding candidate filing, voting machines, special elections, ballots, and recounts. This act requires all candidates to file affidavits of eligibility, prohibits candidates from poll watching at polling places, clarifies that a voting machine's internal audit data may be used in a recount in some instances, sets the date for certain special elections, and revises the filing deadlines for community college board candidates, among other changes to the code.

New election laws of note that were not part of the Secretary of State's legislative package include:

Act 188 (HB 1246) sponsored by Representative Richard Carroll (District 39) and Senator Mary Anne Salmon (District 31) increases the period of time during which petitions for qualification as an independent candidate or new political party may be circulated from 60 days prior to the filing deadline to 90 days.

Act 281 (HB 1404) sponsored by Representative Kathy Webb (District 37) and Senator Steve Bryles (District 15) provides that statewide ballot issues are assigned their own number chronologically upon approval in an effort to help voters distinguish between ballot issues by number.

Act 292 (SB 45) sponsored by Senator Jerry Taylor (District 23) requires county boards of election commissioners to consult with each school district regarding the number and location of polling sites for the district's annual school election and modifies the formula by which school districts pay for their elections.

Act 375 (SB 56) sponsored by Senator Paul Miller (District 10) repeals the provision for a separate presidential preferential primary election held in February thus recombining this election with the statewide primary election in May.

Act 658 (SB 192) sponsored by Sen. Faris makes the act of possessing another's absentee ballot with the intent to commit fraud a felony and makes it a misdemeanor to assist more than four disabled or illiterate persons at the polls.

Act 812 (SB 901) sponsored by Senator Sue Madison (District 7) allows county boards of election commissioners to reduce or eliminate the number of open polling places on primary election day if there are only unopposed candidates and no other ballot issues for consideration.

Act 1294 (HB 1646) sponsored by Representative David Rainey (District 11) requires at least one polling site in each county containing a city of the second class or larger that has registered electors in a school election for a school district in that county.

Act 1407 (HB 2266) sponsored by Representative Andrea Lea (District 68) requires that the number of petition signatures needed for district judge candidates is one percent of the qualified electors, but not more than 2,000 total.



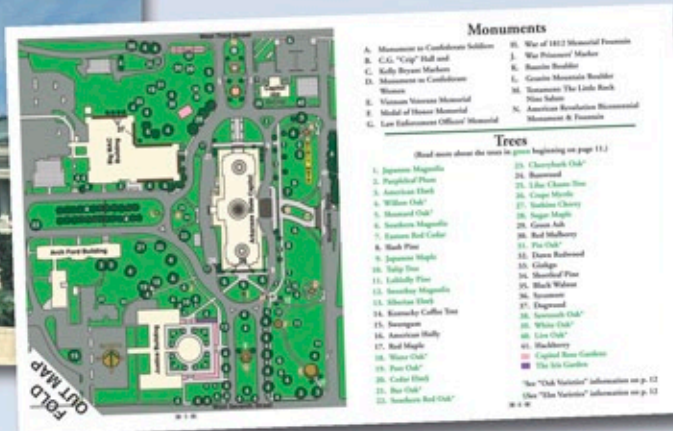
Secretary Daniels enters the Senate chamber on the opening day (left) to certify election results for the 87th General Assembly. Special guests at the Capitol during session included former President Bill Clinton (center) and country music legend Charley Pride (right).





A Walk On The Hill

A self-guided tour of the Arkansas State Capitol grounds and monuments



Celebrate Spring with a Capitol Walkabout

As spring warms Arkansas weather, it's the perfect time to enjoy a stroll through the Capitol grounds. Find your way and learn about the monuments, gardens and trees by using the self-guided tour of the grounds, **A Walk on the Hill**, which debuted in 2008. This handy booklet contains the stories of monuments, descriptions of trees, and a map for easy identification of points of interest. It is available at the Capitol Visitor Services desk inside the first floor rotunda area.

(ONLINE Continued from page 3)

To make the transition from paper to screen easier, each application follows the same flow as the original paper forms with a few convenient enhancements. The online filing application will store certain recurring information, then in future filings will fill in those fields automatically,

which saves time and improves accuracy. The system also automatically calculates totals in several categories, which the user can then edit as needed. Incomplete forms can be saved and finalized later, giving users the freedom to file from anywhere before the reporting deadline.

Filing this information online makes it possible to store the information

electronically, which is a greener system that takes up far less shelf space. The digital data is also much more searchable, yielding a more transparent system that is far more accessible to the public.

To find the online financial reporting portal, visit www.sos.arkansas.gov/financialdisclosure.

Arkansas Folk Center Highlighted In Spring Exhibit

Quilts, fiddles and mountain music are the rustic trademarks of life in the hills of Arkansas, the subject for the newest State Capitol exhibit, **Arkansas Folk**. It features the folk culture of the Ozark highlands of Northern Arkansas as preserved by the Ozark Folk Center.

Located near Mountain View in Stone County, the Ozark Folk Center was established in 1973 to preserve the traditional arts, trades, and the popular culture of the hill country. This exhibit – which includes handicrafts and musical instruments along with photographs, videos and music – highlights the rich legacy of the Ozark Folk Center and its research collections, now part of the state archives.

A collaboration between the History Commission and the Secretary of State's office, the exhibit affords Capitol visitors a sampler of Ozark folk life, as well as glimpses of the History Commission's other holdings related to Arkansans' traditional crafts and ways of life.

The **Arkansas Folk** exhibit is on display in the State Capitol's first-floor galleries through May 25. The Capitol is open to the public 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekends and holidays.





5-09

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Legislators, Laborers Coexist in Capitol's Earliest Days

April 28, 1911, was a bright early-spring day in Little Rock. No rain fell, and the temperature rose no higher than a pleasant 77 degrees. But on Capitol Hill, work kept the population warm. The legislature, which often adjourned as early as mid-March, instead would remain in session until May 13. They shared the building with the constitutional officers and their modest respective staffs, as well as with architect's representatives, contractors and laborers.

Those laborers included numbers of inmates of the state penitentiary, which had been located on the same grounds. Inmate labor had been the foundation of the Capitol project's work force; the Assembly had in 1899 ordained that as many as 200 convicts would labor on the new home for Arkansas's government.

After years of slow progress, the Capitol was habitable but far from finished in the spring of 1911. Much work remained to be done on the interior; but – as this image indicates – the exterior appeared much as it does today. Shadows indicate the picture was taken in late morning. In the foreground and middle distance, inmates are seen moving earth and cleaning up the new grounds, just as inmates care for the building and its surroundings today. Just north of the Capitol stands

the remaining portion of the old prison dormitory, used first for prisoner/laborer living quarters, then materials storage; it would soon disappear.

Little Rock photographer Thomas Rayburn captured this view slightly less than two years after he exposed the first of over 700 glass plates to document the revival and completion of the Capitol undertaking. He was contracted by the Capitol Commission for this purpose. The image shown here is the latest-dated Rayburn Capitol image known to have survived. In the decades since the Capitol's completion, Rayburn's photographs, prints and negatives dispersed. Some remained in the Capitol, but more than half were lost or discarded. This image appeared in 2008 on an online auction site; it is now part of the Capitol's archives.

